

No mention is made by Friedmann of the method favoured by Robin Hill. This projection method is fully discussed by E. C. Stuart Baker (*Cuckoo Problems*, 1942, p. 116) and he accepts its occurrence, particularly "when the nests are in holes into which she cannot enter in order to lay her egg in the ordinary way." C. J. O. Harrison (*The Emu*, 69, 1969: 178) also reviews the field evidence and feels that the theory of mandibular transfer lacks crucial proof and "that there is at present no satisfactory evidence that any Cuckoo species deposits its eggs in the nest of other birds except by laying directly into the nest."

—A. L. MILHINCH, Seabrook.

The foregoing notes were submitted to Mr. Stephen Marchant, Melbourne, who is devoting special attention to the problem of egg deposition by Cuckoos into domed nests. He comments as follows: "Mr. Milhinch's observation is most interesting and valuable, but unfortunately cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of egg-laying by a Cuckoo in a domed nest. From the account, it seems that Mr. Milhinch did not inspect the nest of the Yellow-tailed Thornbill before the Cuckoo's visit, and therefore it is not certain that it did not already contain a Cuckoo's egg. Moreover, because he presumably caught the Cuckoo at the nest before it had finished whatever it was doing, we cannot be sure that it was not going to remove the eggs as Chalk (*Emu* 49, 1950: 219-220) observed.

"Hill's statement is probably based on an assessment of the literature and I would hold that it is correct because almost all the published statements that I have seen on deposition of the egg by the bill are open to the sort of criticism made above on the present observation. My own impression has been that Friedmann accepted too readily the evidence for deposition of the egg by the bill; I would claim that none of it is sufficiently firmly based. On the other hand, there have been reports of Cuckoo's eggs in nests in holes and similar places, which a Cuckoo could not possibly enter (see, for example, Baker, *Cuckoo Problems*, 1942). Thus, in spite of what seems to me to be unsatisfactory evidence for positively observed deposition by the bill, the matter remains a possibility and the incident, as described by Mr. Milhinch, emphasizes the vital importance of letting such events take their full course without interference and of observing most closely and critically everything that happens."

An Early Breeding Record of the Black-faced Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*.—The Black-faced Cormorant is recorded as a summer breeder in Western Australian waters. Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*) give December-January as the egg laying period and the clutch as of 2 eggs.

Accompanied by Mr. T. Allen, I visited Lion Island in Esperance Bay on August 4, 1970 and found a breeding colony of this species totalling 36 nests, on a slope 100 ft. above the sea. Two nests contained 4 eggs, 20 with 3 eggs, 2 with 2 eggs, 3 with one egg and 9 nests were at various stages of construction.

A subsequent visit on September 12, 1970 revealed that the breeding attempt was near a total failure, most nests containing small dead young. The colony had moved eastwards down the slope, where many pairs were building new nests or had commenced to lay. The weather between these visits was constantly rough and with the lack of shallow water feeding grounds the cormorants were possibly unable to brood and obtain sufficient food.

The small increase in this colony, which was recorded at 25 pairs in 1944, may be attributed to these circumstances and summer breeding the result of successive failures during spring.

—TONY E. BUSH, Wubin.